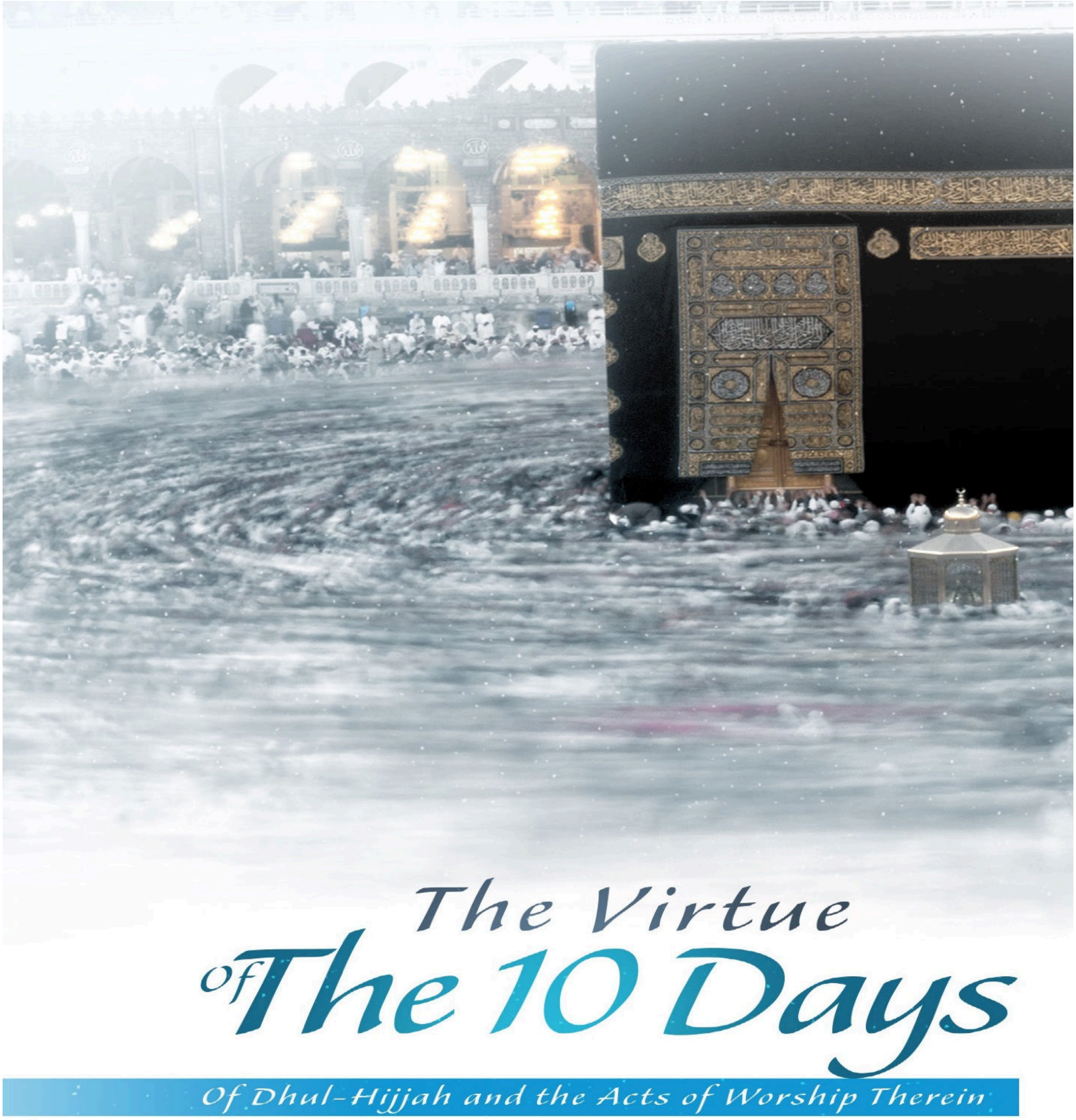

Today we observe a major occasion from among the occasions of worship, this occasion being the first ten days of the sacred month of Dhul-Hijjah, the best ten days of the year according to Allah (سبحانه وتعالى), and He has legislated deeds for us to do during these days so that we may recover what we've missed and mend the shortcomings in our worship. So, what is the status of these ten days? And what is their virtue? What are the most important acts of worship undertaken in these days?

It is sufficient, in clarifying the virtue of these majestic days,

Allah (سبحانه وتعالى) swore by them with His words,

"By the dawn, and [by] ten nights"
(Surah Al-Fajr 1-2)

Ibn Kathir (رحيم الله) said,

"What is meant by the ten nights is the ten days of Dhul-Hijjah, as stated by Ibn 'Abbas, az-Zubayr, Mujahid, and multiple others from the Salaf and Khalaf," and Allah (سبحانه وتعالى) does not swear except by something significant!

Ibnul-Qayyim (رحيم الله) said,

"A period of time that encompasses deeds such as this is worthy of the Lord swearing by it"
(At-Tibyan)

Furthermore, the Prophet (صلى الله عليه و سلم) clarified that the first ten days of the month of Dhul-Hijjah are better than all the days in this world, and that a good deed done in these days is better than all deeds done in other days.

He (صلى الله عليه و سلم) said,

"No deed is better than the deeds in these days (i.e., the ten days of Dhul-Hijjah)." They said, "Not even jihad?" He said, "Not even jihad, except a man who risks his soul and wealth and returns with nothing"
(Reported by al Bukhari from Ibn 'Abbas)

Ibn Rajab al-Hanbali (رحيم الله) said,

"This hadith indicates that a deed in these days [meaning the ten days of Dhul-Hijjah] is more beloved to Allah than a deed in all other days of the world without any exception, and if it is more beloved to Allah then it is better according to Him"
(Lataif al-Ma'arif)

Ibnul-Qayyim (رحيم الله) said,

"The ten days of Dhul-Hijjah were deemed virtuous due to the days they include, for included among them is the day of slaughter, the day of 'Arafah, and the day of Tarwiyah [the 8th of Dhul-Hijjah, the day in which hajj is commenced]"
(Zad al-Ma'ad)

Among these ten days is a day that is great according to Allah. It is the day of 'Arafah, the witnessed day, the day on which Allah completed the religion, and fasting on it expiates the sins of two years. Also among these days is the day of slaughter, which is the greatest day of the year, the day of the greater hajj on which comprises a number of acts of obedience and worship that are not gathered together on any other day.

Indeed, reaching these ten days is a tremendous blessing from the blessings of Allah (سبحانه وتعالى) upon His slaves, which none but the worshipers and the diligent truly appreciate. So, the obligation upon the Muslim slave is to perceive this blessing and take advantage of this opportunity, for the Salaf would be diligent in worship on these days more so than any other day, as established in their beautiful biographies.

There are many virtuous deeds that the Muslim should strive to perform on these days, such as jihad for the cause of Allah, reciting the Quran, diligently attending the congregational prayer in the masajid, being dutiful to one's parents, upholding the ties of kinship, being good to one's neighbours, reconciling between people, honouring one's guest, spending for the cause of Allah, visiting the sick, etc. However, there are certain deeds that are specified for these days, including:

Making Much Dhikr:

Allah (سبحانه وتعالى) said,

"That they may witness benefits for themselves and mention the name of Allah on known days"
(Surah Al-Hajj 28)

Ibn Rajab (رحيم الله) said,

"The bulk of the scholars hold the view that these known days are the ten days of Dhul-Hijjah"
(Al-Lataif)

For this reason, the Prophet (صلى الله عليه و سلم) enjoined upon the Muslims much

tahlil (saying “la ilaha illallah”),

takbir (saying “Allahu Akbar”), and

tahmid (saying “alhamdulillah”) in these days.

The Prophet Muhammad (صلى الله عليه و سلم) said:

“There are no days that are greater according to Allah or on which a deed is more beloved to Him than these ten days, so make much tahlil, takbir, and tahmid in them” (Reported by Ahmad from Ibn ‘Umar)

Al-Bukhari said in his “Sahih,”

“‘Umar (رضي الله عنه) would make takbir in his tent in Mina and the people in the masjid would hear him, so they would make takbir, and the people in the market would make takbir, to the point that Mina would shake with takbir. Ibn ‘Umar would make takbir in Mina on those days, and would do so after the prayers, and on his mattress, in his pavilion, in his gatherings, and on the pathways throughout all those days.”

Therefore, takbir is from among the deeds of the Sunnah specified for these ten days, and it is of two types: takbir performed generally and takbir performed at a specific time. Takbir is performed, in general, at all times, from the first of the ten days to the end of the days of tashriq (the 13th of Dhul-Hijjah). As for the takbir performed at a specific time, it is done after the five daily prayers (after the salam in the obligatory prayers) and it begins from Fajr on the day of ‘Arafah – for those not performing hajj – and lasts until ‘asr on the last day of tashriq, as was reported from some of the Sahabah. As for the one performing hajj, then he begins his takbir when he stones Jamrat al- ‘Aqabah on the day of Eid.

The wording of the takbir is as follows:

“Allahu Akbar, Allahu Akbar, la ilahah illallah, wallahu Akbar, Allahu akbar, walillahil-hamd”
(Reported by Ibn Abi Shaybah from Ibn Mas’ud)
There are also other wordings mentioned in the Athar.

Fasting: It is a sunnah for the Muslim to fast the first nine days of Dhul-Hijjah (all of them or however many of them is easy for him), for it is reported that one of the wives of the Prophet (صلى الله عليه و سلم) said,

"Allah's Messenger (صلى الله عليه و سلم) would fast [the first] nine days of Dhul-Hijjah" (Reported by Abu Dawud),

And most of the scholars hold the view that fasting the first nine days of Dhul-Hijjah is highly recommended
(Sharh Sahih Muslim – An-Nawawi)

Slaughtering an Udhiyah (Sacrificial Animal): From among the deeds performed in these ten days is to seek to draw closer to Allah (سبحانه وتعالى) by slaughtering an Udhiyah. The Udhiyah is an emphasized sunnah according to the majority of the fuqaha, so the Muslim who is capable of this should not neglect it, for Allah's Messenger (صلى الله عليه و سلم) persisted upon it, as did the Sahabah after him.

It is reported that Ibn 'Umar (رضي الله عنه) said,

"Allah's Messenger (صلى الله عليه و سلم) remained in Madinah for ten years slaughtering Udhiyah"
(Reported by at-Tirmidhī who declared it Hasan)

Ibnul-Qayyim (رحيم الله) said,

"He (صلى الله عليه و سلم) never used to leave off the Udhiyah"
(Zad al-Ma'ad)

Hajj and 'Umrah: Indeed, from the best deeds that the slave can perform in these ten blessed days is to perform hajj to the sacred House of Allah, if he is able to do so. Therefore, if one is enabled by his Lord (سبحانه وتعالى) to perform hajj to His House and performs the rites of the hajj in the appropriate manner, he will have a share in the statement of His Prophet (صلى الله عليه و سلم), "One 'umrah to the another expiates the sins committed between them, and the reward for an accepted hajj is nothing but Jannah"
(Reported by al Bukhari and Muslim from Abu Hurayrah)

We ask Allah (سبحانه وتعالى) to strengthen the mujahidin so they may liberate Makkah and Madinah from the tawaghit of Al Salul – may Allah disgrace them – and to bless us with hajj and 'umrah in the shade of the Shari'ah.

One may ask,

"How do we reconcile between the hadith of the Prophet (صلى الله عليه و سلم) in which he declares the deeds in the ten days of Dhul-Hijjah to be better than all other deeds, and between the many mutawatir ahadith which establish the virtue of jihad for the cause of Allah over all other deeds and also declare that it is the peak of Islam?"

An example of this is the hadith in which Allah's Messenger (صلى الله عليه و سلم) was asked

"Which deed is best?" He replied, "Believing in Allah and His Messenger." Someone asked, "Then what?" He said, "Jihad for the cause of Allah"
(Reported by al-Bukhari and Muslim from Abu Hurayrah)

When reconciling between these texts, the author of "Fayd al-Bari" stated,

"This is the case when jihad is not obligatory, for the statements having to do with the virtues of deeds are concerning those that are not obligatory."

Ibn Rajab (رحيم الله) said,

"The obligatory deeds of the first ten days of Dhul-Hijjah are better than the obligatory deeds of any other ten days, and the voluntary deeds of the first ten days of Dhul-Hijjah are better than the voluntary deeds of any other ten days, but the voluntary deeds of the first ten days of Dhul-Hijjah are not better than the obligatory deeds of any other days. So, fasting ten days of Ramadan is better than fasting ten days of Dhul-Hijjah because the obligatory deed is better than the voluntary deed"
(Fath al-Bari)

Likewise, the scholars have concluded that jihad – even if it is offensive jihad – is the best of deeds and nothing is equal to it at all.

Shaykhul-Islam Ibn Taymiyyah (رحيم الله) said,

“The scholars have agreed – as far as I know – that there are no voluntary deeds better than jihad, so it is better than voluntary hajj, better than voluntary fast, and better than voluntary prayer”
(Majmu’ al-Fatawa)

How is it then if it is defensive jihad and it becomes obligatory on every Muslim, as is the case today?!

Ibn Taymiyyah (رحيم الله) said about the jihad to repel the Tatars,

“By Allah, even if the first forerunners from the Muhajirin and Ansar, such as Abu Bakr, ‘Umar, ‘Uthman, ‘Ali, and other than them, were present in this era, waging jihad against these criminals would be from among the best of their deeds”
(Majmu’ al-Fatawa)

Therefore, if jihad is fard ‘ayn (as is the case with defensive jihad), it is better than all other acts of worship (whether obligatory or recommended), and if jihad is fard kifayah (as is the case with offensive jihad) and it takes place during the ten days of Dhul-Hijjah, it is better than any voluntary deed that the slave could ever do.

So, take advantage – O Muslims – of these tremendous days, for by Allah they are priceless. Rush to perform good deeds and hasten before the onset of death, for today there is opportunity to perform deeds and no accountability, but tomorrow there is accountability and no opportunity to perform deeds.

O Allah, make us diligent in performing good deeds in the ten days of Dhul-Hijjah, and aid us in remembering You, being grateful to You, and worshiping You in the best of manners.